

Ten take home messages to think about if you are concerned about mold in dairy feed

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If you are concerned that mold risks could be a problem, the following guidelines may be helpful:

1. Testing for mycotoxins can provide an estimation of risk. Tests can be expensive and sampling and feed variation can reduce the usefulness of the results.
2. Adding a mycotoxin binder can reduce the impact of toxins by reducing their impact in the digestive tract and/or not absorbed (binders include yeast cell wall extracts or MOS products and clay binders).
3. Drying wet corn below 15 percent moisture stops further toxin development.
4. High moisture corn could increase the risk of additional mold growth until the pH of the fermented corn drops.
5. Adding a grain inoculant to speed up fermentation and stabilize the wet corn is recommended.
6. Young animals and pregnant cattle are at higher risk while steers can tolerate higher levels.
7. Removing fines, damaged seeds, and cracked corn kernels can reduce toxin risk.
8. Distillers grain produced from ethanol production can concentrate the level of toxins in the original corn used; know your sources of distillers grain.
9. Corn silage made late in the season with mold damage could have toxins, but the low pH will stop additional toxin production.
10. Adding propionic acid at the time of ensiling can reduce mold development in wet corn.